THE AERONAUT

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You who would learn to lead a happy life,
First learn to Rule -
And then to Have a wife.

[redacted].

Eglapog continued as follows — "But there is one thing to be taken into consideration which sets things in different lights. I have a wife, who has borne me several children and is perfectly faithful, alas! to my bed - and I cannot divorce her; or turn her out of my house. As your wife wife was young and pretty, mine is as old as Nestor and ugly as Cerberus. As your's was prodigal, mine is stingy; and as yours was sullen, mine is loquacious. I married her for interest, as you mar:

ried yours for love. Your wife's small regard for your pecuniary concerns has ruined you, and my spouse's parsimonious disposition prevents me from enjoying my wealth. She was the daughter of my predecessor, and as I got a good fortune by her, and dare not offend her relations, she contrives, in spite of her wrinkles to maintain an authority over me, which debars me from all domestic enjoyment; while her meanness affects the whole appearance of my house, my family and establishment; and keeps all Strangers of distinction, as well as my own citizens from my porch. Now I will tell you what I mean to do; as you are certainly going on an expedition which would make any man appear very ridiculous, I will disguise myself and go to Delphos with you, and you shall consult the oracle for us both."

Hippecous was highly delighted with this rencontre. He reflected, that although he should get no satisfactory answer from the oracle, yet he could not fail to make his journey profitable from the fellowship of Syllagog.

The Temple of Delphos and the surrounding places have been faithfully described by authors; and as the pair met with no uncommon adventure, we shall not give a particular account of their progress. But when the priests received the question — "a Schoolmaster wants to know how to govern his wife" — they returned him for answer that "he must find out what part of speech a wife was, and manage her according to the rules of Concord and Government." When the rich Citizen made a similar demand through the Schoolmaster, he received for response, "that he must make the tour of Greece and observe the conduct of different husbands."

With these oracular replies, the travellers, like all others, departed, greatly dissatisfied, and in worse perplexity than ever. However, as no better could be obtained, and they heard that the seven wise men were holding a meeting at Olympia, they bent their footsteps thither.

They came before the sages, who were sitting in full divan in the open air. Hippeas, making three scrapes and clearing his throat, then began to address them in the following manner.

"Hem. hollow, my masters: being a poor pedagogue, I have been to consult the oracle about my wife, who is the stubbornest jade in all Athens; and am directed to find out what part of speech she is. Now all your wise sayings and speeches will not help me a whit in this matter. You often say "Know thyself." I know myself to be the wretchedest ass that ever brayed, and a bigger fool than any of the companions of Ulysses, who got into the cave of the Cyclops; but I have not his wisdom, to know how to help myself out. You Chilo, wish "to see the end of a long life" said that good man. I shall never do, if my wife means to enjoy the prospect in my company. You Pittacus, have advised us to *know our opportunity*, or, what I take to be pretty much the same thing, to know when we are well off — but as it is all over with me, your counsel is of no use. You Bias have told us that *the wicked are more numerous than the good*, and that I come in with the rest, which is a very wise remark but, as I said before, it is no great consolation to me now. You Periander have assured us that *Industry can perform every thing*. more I grant you; but when I pull one way, and my wife the other, it fares with my substance as it did with the carcases which the robber whom Hercules destroyed, tied between two bent limbs of a tree; it is all pulled in pieces, to make sport for the winds and the vultures. You Cleobulus, tell us, that *the middle way is the best*. In matrimonial affairs I take it, that reason

-ing is the middle way between coaxing and cuffing; but my wife is ignorant of the first principles of logic. Gentleness [illegible] her all-[illegible] [illegible] makes her sulky; and to argument she is as deaf as [illegible]. Ye Thales have warned men that if they trusted to others they would be damnified; I resigned my happiness on the discretion of my wife, and have got a beating in consequence the bruise of which I still carry, and expect to wear in my grave. Not being able to gather any instruction as to the present case from all your wise speeches, I pray my masters that you will tell me what part of speech a wife is, for which I shall be everlastingly obliged to you."

"Why, said Thales, are you a schoolmaster, and do not know that 'a wife is a noun substantive, and must be governed by an active verb?'" "But, said [illegible]cles, my wife is a heteroclite; she is utterly indeclinable and has no inflexions whatever, being always the same stubborn, inflexible and provoking jade." "You are the personal pronoun, said Periander, and she ought to form your accidence; being the property of you, a helpmeet to you, in subjection to you, and a companion with you; Vocative lamenting, because there ought to be no lamentation in the case." "Ah! rejoined Stiffecorn, you tell me what she ought to be; but I repeat that she is the curse of my life, a Gorgon to my sight, a dead weight on my shoulders, carrying me with her, until she will bring my red wig to an untimely grave — and as for the Vocative we were both in it on the same day, when I got flogged on her account, and struck the ballance on her carcase." "She is, said Pittacus, only an adjective or adjunct to you, who are the noun; she signifies nothing by herself, but in connection with you, qualifies your happiness; and she ought to agree with you in every respect." "Not in gender, of course said the Pedagogue — as to number, God help me! she is a noun of multitude. For lungs! with reverence I speak it, I believe she is equal to you all; and if I should be long on my travels, I have no doubt I shall find a housefull on my return. As to case, she will not agree with me in any case whatever, being as I told you before, indeclinable."

"A wife, said Solon is an impersonal verb, in all modes and times agreeing with nothing but herself, and governing by an oblique way of her own. The Destinies manage the construction of the sentence, and it behoves the members to submit quietly to what they cannot control or avoid." "Ah cried Hippicus, I know you have composed a long poem* about the Destinies, I won't trouble you to repeat it all now, I thank you; but if I had thought of it before I started from Athens, I might have been saved this long journey."

"Come along Hippicus," cried Syllagog, "we are likely to get no good here. I will arrange thy affairs, and if my wife pleases to let me, we will even set out upon our tour."

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* Vide Aeronaut No ...

The remainder of this fragment is unfortunately lost.